HARRY HORN WATER/POWER LINE PROJECT

MEPA/NEPA/HB495 CHECKLIST

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of Proposed State Action:** The proposed action is to extend local water and power lines to provide lighting, power outlets, and a water hydrant for the group picnic shelter and temporary ice skating rink.

2. **Agency Authority for the Proposed Action**:

   MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (Montana Annotated Code 23-1-101)

3. **Name of Project:** Power and water line extensions for the Harry Horn unit of Flathead Lake State Park.

4. **Name, Address, and Phone Number of Project Sponsor (if other than the agency):**

5. **If Applicable:**

   Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: November 2003
   Estimated Completion Date: November 2003
   Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 0%

6. **Location Affected by Proposed Action (county, township, and range):**

   Flathead Lake State Park – Harry Horn Unit, Flathead County, Section 36, T27N, R20W

7. **Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

	Acres		Acres
(a) Developed:		(d) Floodplain	_____
residential	_____		
industrial	_____	(e) Productive:	
		irrigated cropland	_____
(b) Open/Woodlands/Recreation	1 acre	dry cropland	_____
		forestry	_____
(c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas	_____	rangeland	_____
		other	_____

8. **Map/Site Plan: Attach an original 8½" x 11" or larger section of the most recent USGS 7.5' series topographic map showing the location and boundaries of the area that would be affected by the proposed action. A different map scale may be substituted if more appropriate or if required by agency rule. If available, a site plan should also be attached.**

9. Narrative Summary of the Proposed Action or Project, Including the Benefits and Purpose of the Proposed Action:

Proposal:
It is proposed that power and water lines be extended approximately 400' from just north of the entrance roadway to the south end of the Harry Horn parking lot adjacent to the picnic shelter and where the temporary ice rink is located. The water line extension would tap off the main water line at the shutoff valve just north of the entrance road. It would run through a culvert under the roadway (see map). On the opposite side of the road, for Alternative 1, it runs along the road and edge of the parking lot. In Alternative 2, it runs through the forest directly to the shelter. The power line would be extended from the power box near the restroom to where it intersects with the water line, and then follow the same path. The depth of the water line extension will be approximately 48" to prevent freezing. Where it runs through the culvert it would be insulated and heat taped. The power line depth from the meter box to the intersection with the water line would be approximately 12". From the south side of the roadway, it would be placed in the same trench, but approximately 12" above the water line. The width of the trench would be approximately 12". The width of the disturbance area in Alternative 1 would be 6-8 feet along the entrance road and 2-3 feet along the edge of the parking lot. In Alternative 2, the width of the disturbance area would be approximately 6-8 feet. The disturbed area would be the result of the use of a backhoe for trenching. Disturbed areas would be re-seeded with native plant species.

Purpose:
The utilities will provide year-round lighting and power for use at the picnic shelter and provide an accessible water source. Additionally, the lighting will increase safety and security year-round for the parking area. The frost-free hydrant will be utilized to maintain favorable ice conditions for the skating rink during winter months.

Benefits:
The extension of the power and water lines to the picnic shelter would improve service for visitors who use the shelter. Currently there is no power or water to the area. The closest water outlet is the restroom approximately 150 yards to the northwest. Power at the shelter would allow it to be utilized after dark and/or allow for plug-in appliances (i.e., coffee makers, microwaves, etc.) and for use of audio/video equipment for interpretive presentations. Lighting would make the area safer for visitors after dark and provide additional security. In winter, the water hydrant would be utilized to refill the ice rink and coat the ice as needed. This would make maintenance of the rink much easier. Additionally, the lighting would allow for use of the rink after dark. Presently, it is only safely usable during daylight hours, and many people are unable to use the rink since they work during the day. Utility service to the area would provide a higher quality experience for visitors and enhance the recreational opportunities for Harry Horn Park year-round.
This action will fulfill FWP's commitment to the local community and the Horn family by providing utilities to the shelter as originally planned when Harry Horn Park was developed. This action would also further the Parks Division's Program Outcome to exceed visitor expectations and enhance their experiences at Montana State Parks.

10. Listing of Any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency That Has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction: None

(a) Permits:

Agency Name	Permit	Date Filed/#

(b) Funding:

Agency Name	Funding Amount

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

Agency Name	Type of Responsibility

10. List of Agencies Consulted During Preparation of the EA:

MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks – Design and Construction Bureau

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Evaluation of the impacts of the proposed action, including secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical and human environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. LAND RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
➢a. Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure?		X				
b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility?		X				
➢c. Destruction, covering, or modification of any unique geologic or physical features?		X				
d. Changes in siltation, deposition, or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream, or the bed or shore of a lake?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard?		X				
f. Other (list)						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2. AIR Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT ☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated ☼	Comment Index
	Unknown ☼	None	Minor ☼	Potentially Significant		
➢a. Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13c.)		X				
b. Creation of objectionable odors?		X				
c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally?		X				
d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants?		X				
♦e. For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.)						N/A
f. Other		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

3. WATER Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
➢a. Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality, including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen, or turbidity?		X				
b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff?		X				
c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows?		X				
d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body?		X				
e. Exposure of people or property to water-related hazards such as flooding?		X				
f. Changes in the quality of groundwater?		X				
g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater?		X				
h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater?		X				
i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation?		X				
j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality?		X				
k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity?		X				
♦♦l. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.)						N/A
♦m. For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.)						N/A
n. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Changes in the diversity, productivity, or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X			4a.
b. Alteration of a plant community?		X				
c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land?		X				
e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds?			X		yes	4e
♦♦f. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland?						N/A
g. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. Although some disturbance to vegetation will occur from trenching and use of heavy equipment, the effect is considered minor. The project area is heavily vegetated and recovers quickly from disruption. The plant communities on-site are well represented and are not expected to undergo significant losses due to proposed construction.

4e. Disturbance of the ground cover may allow for the establishment or spread of noxious weeds, particularly knapweed. All disturbed areas will be re-seeded with native plant species currently found on-site. The area will be monitored and incorporated into the weed management program for the park.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat?		X				
b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species?		X				
c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species?		X				
d. Introduction of new species into an area?		X				
e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?		X				
f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species?		X				
g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest, or other human activity)?		X				
♦♦h. For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.)						N/A
♦i. For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.)						N/A
j. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

6. NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Increases in existing noise levels?			X			6a.
b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels?						
c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property?		X				
d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation?		X				
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Some visitors and adjacent property owners may be exposed to noise from the use of trenching equipment. Use of this equipment will occur on weekdays and during normal business hours. The effect will be temporary and is expected to last no more than one week.

7. LAND USE Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area?		X				
b. Conflict with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance?		X				
c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action?		X				
d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences?		X				
e. Other: _____		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

8. RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption?		X				
b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or create a need for a new plan?		X				
c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard?			X			8c.
♦d. For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a.)						N/A
e. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8c. Outdoor-style ground-fault outlets will be utilized at the shelter to minimize risk of electric shock. Additionally a lockable power switch box will be located on the light pole adjacent to the parking lot. This will allow for the shutting off of power to the outlets during the off-season or other appropriate times.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Commen t Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area?		X				
b. Alteration of the social structure of a community?		X				
c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income?		X				
d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity?		X				
e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods?			X			9e.
f. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9e. The use of heavy equipment along the roadway and in the parking lot during construction may present a minor hazard to traffic that has entered the park. However, the existing road and parking area is sufficiently wide enough to allow park traffic to safely pass. Warning signs will be placed along the road to alert visitors to the use of construction equipment.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify:			X			10a.
b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues?		X				
c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electrical power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications?			X			10c.
d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source?			X			10d.
➢e. Define projected revenue sources.			X			10e.
➢f. Define projected maintenance costs.			X			10f.
g. Other:						

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. The action will result in altered services to the picnic shelter. Power and water will now be available at this facility. Effects are deemed to be positive and will allow more flexibility and add convenience for users.

10c. The proposed action is to extend existing power and water lines to the south end of Harry Horn park area. The impact to existing utilities is considered minor.

10d. It is estimated the increase in power consumption for the security light and outlets at the shelter will cost approximately $125 a year. Additional water costs will be minimal, as the park is charged a flat rate.

10e. Initial cost of the project is estimated to be around $1,500 for materials and labor. This will come from the current operating budget. The estimated increase in utility costs will be paid for out of the revenues generated from the rental of the shelter. As part of the deliberations between FWP and the community of Bigfork during the original Harry Horn Park capital project, it was agreed that shelter rental revenues would be used to help pay for maintenance of Harry Horn Park. Currently, revenue from shelter rental is approximate $150/yr.

10f. Maintenance cost will be low and will be reflected in the additional cost for power and water as noted in 10d.

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

11. AESTHETICS/RECREATION Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Alteration of any scenic vista, or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view?			X			11a.
b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood?		X				
➢c. Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Attach tourism report.)		X				11c.
♦d. For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails, or wilderness areas be impacted? (Also see 11a, 11c.)						N/A
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

11a. During construction some ground disturbance will occur due to trenching and use of equipment. This will be visible until the plant community has reestablished itself through reseeding efforts.

11c. The extension of the power and water lines to the picnic shelter will have a positive effect on the quality of the recreational experience. It will provide convenience and safety for the users of this area. It will help in maintenance of the ice rink and allow for after-dark use both for skating in the winter and for shelter use in the summer.

12. CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES Will the proposed action result in:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
➢a. Destruction or alteration of any site, structure, or object of prehistoric, historic, or paleontological importance?		X				
b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values?		X				
c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area?		X				
♦♦d. For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Attach SHPO letter of clearance. (Also see 12a.)						N/A
e. Other:		X				

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole,:	IMPACT☼				Can Impact Be Mitigated☼	Comment Index
	Unknown☼	None	Minor☼	Potentially Significant		
a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources, which create a significant effect when considered together or in total.)		X				
b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur?		X				
c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard, or formal plan?		X				
d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed?		X				
e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created?		X				
♦f. <u>For P-R/D-J</u>, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.)						N/A
♦♦g. <u>For P-R/D-J</u>, list any federal or state permits required.						N/A

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (Attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

☼ Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or can not be evaluated.

➢ Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

♦ Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

♦♦ Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW (CONTINUED)

1. **Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no-action alternative) to the proposed action, whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider; and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:**

   Alternative 1. Extend the power and water lines along the south edge of the entrance road and along the east edge of the parking lot. The water line extension would tap off the main water line at the shut off valve just north of the entrance road (see map). It would run through a culvert under the roadway. Where the water line passes through the culvert, it would be insulated and heat taped to prevent freezing. From the point where the line emerges from the culvert, it would run underground west along the base of the roadbed to the entrance of the parking lot. From there it would follow the edge of the parking lot south to the picnic shelter service road and then to the shelter. A frost-free hydrant would be placed midway between the parking lot and the shelter. The power line would tap off the power box near the restroom, run down to the road, and then along the road to the junction with the water line. From there it would follow the same path. A light pole would be place at the corner of the shelter service road and the parking lot. A light and power outlet would be placed at opposite ends of the shelter structure.

   Trenching to a depth of 48" will be required for the water line to allow for year-round use. For the power line, the depth is approximately 12 inches. However, once the power line intersects with the water line, it will utilize the same trench. Area disturbance from a backhoe will occur during trenching and require vegetative rehabilitation. On the south side of the road to the parking lot entrance, the width of disturbance will be approximately 6-8 feet. This is due to the fact that there is a steep slope along the road, with a drop of approximately 12 feet. The trench will run at the base of the roadbed slope to the parking lot, and the backhoe will need to access the slope base from the parking lot. Once the trench reaches the edge of the parking lot, the backhoe can continue while on the asphalt, thereby limiting the width of disturbance to the 2-3 feet of gravel road edge along the shoulder. Various native plant seed, reflecting the species found on site, will be utilized to maintain diversity of the forest floor plant community where the trench follows the base of the slope. The parking lot shoulder may only require additional gravel. Following the path along the edges of the road and parking lot will result in a longer path and, hence, more line materials and cable. Although it will require more trenching in linear footage, it would reduce the overall resource impact, as less disturbance would occur along the edge of the parking lot and along the north side of the road where the power cable is located. Additionally, if maintenance were required in the future, it would likely result in less disturbance than Alternative 2, as most of both lines could be accessed from a hardened surface.

Alternative 2. Run the power and water line extension through the forest directly to the picnic shelter. This option is initially the same as Alternative 1 until the lines emerge from the culvert on the south side of the road. From this point the path is a more direct route through the forest to the picnic shelter. The more direct route would reduce the total length of the lines by approximately 125 feet. It would require routing the lines between trees from the base of the roadbed to the shelter and then along the shelter service road. The area of disturbance would be a minimum of 6-8 feet, and may be more, as the backhoe will likely need more space for maneuvering. Trench depth would be the same as Alternative 1. This may result in more tree root difficulties through the forest versus along the road edge. More vegetative rehabilitation would be necessary, and any future maintenance in this section would result in forest floor disturbance.

Alternative 3. No Action. This alternative will maintain the status quo with the result that service will not extend beyond present levels. The closest water source is approximately 150 yards from the picnic shelter, and users will either need to bring their own or access this source. Power will not be available to the shelter and, hence, the shelter will not be available for use in the evening, nor will audio/video equipment be accommodated for presentations.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

Equipment disturbance will be kept to a minimum and with as linear and narrow a disturbance path as possible. Equipment will be kept on hardened surfaces where feasible. All disturbed areas will be leveled and reseeded with a mix of native plant species corresponding to those presently found at this location.

PART III. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

The extension of the power and water lines to the picnic shelter would improve service for visitors who use the shelter. Currently there is no power or water to the area. The closest water outlet is the restroom approximately 150 yards to the northwest. Power at the shelter would allow it to be utilized after dark and/or allow for plug-in appliances (i.e., coffee makers, microwaves, etc.) and for use of audio/video equipment for interpretive presentations. Lighting would make the area safer for visitors after dark and provide additional security. In winter, the water hydrant would be utilized to refill the ice rink and coat the ice as needed. This would make maintenance of the rink easier and provide a better skating surface. Additionally, the lighting would allow for use of the rink after dark. Presently, it is only safely usable during daylight hours, and many people are unable to use the rink since they work during the day. Utility service to the area would provide a higher quality experience for visitors and enhance the recreational opportunities for Harry Horn Park year-round. Furthermore, this action will fulfill FWP's commitment to the local community and the Horn family by providing utilities to the shelter as originally planned when Harry Horn Park was developed.

Alternative 1 would require more materials (i.e., water line and power cable) and more trenching in linear footage. Along approximately 80% of the line route, equipment could be utilized on the road or parking lot surface. This would result in less overall impacts to vegetation and less of the disturbance would be noticeable to the visitor. In Alternative 2, less material would be required, but more linear footage runs through the forest with a minimum disturbance width of 6-8 feet. Additionally, the trenching operation in Alternative 2 would bisect the nature trail, and the disturbed area would be more noticeable from other parts of the trail. Aesthetic quality of the nature trail would be somewhat degraded until regrowth has occurred. This could take up to two years. Alternative 3 would maintain the status quo. This would limit safety, convenience, and recreational opportunities to present levels.

Summary of Checklist Comments

4a. Although some disturbance to vegetation will occur from trenching and use of heavy equipment, the effect is considered minor. The project area is heavily vegetated and recovers quickly from disruption. The plant communities on-site are well represented and are not expected to undergo significant losses due to proposed construction.

4e. Disturbance of the ground cover may allow for the establishment or spread of noxious weeds, particularly knapweed. All disturbed areas will be reseeded with native plant species currently found on-site. The area will be monitored and incorporated into the weed management program for the park.

6a. Some visitors and adjacent property owners may be exposed to noise from the use of trenching equipment. Use of this equipment will occur on weekdays and during normal business hours. The effect will be temporary and is expected to last no more than one week.

8c. Outdoor-style ground-fault outlets will be utilized at the shelter to minimize risk of electric shock. Additionally a lockable power switch box will be located on the light pole adjacent to the parking lot. This will allow for the shutting off of power to the outlets during the off-season or other appropriate times.

9e. The use of heavy equipment along the roadway and in the parking lot may present a minor hazard to traffic that has entered the park. However, the existing road and parking area is sufficiently wide to allow visitor traffic to safely pass. Warning signs will be placed along the road to alert visitors to the use of construction equipment.

10a. The action will result in altered services to the picnic shelter. Power and water will now be available at this facility. Effects are deemed to be positive and will allow more flexibility and add convenience for users.

10c. The proposed action is to extend existing power and water lines to the south end of Harry Horn park area. The impact to existing utilities is considered minor.

10d. It is estimated the increase in power consumption for the security light and outlets at the shelter will cost approximately $125 a year. Additional water costs will be minimal, as the park is charged a flat rate.

10e. Initial cost of the project is estimated to be around $1,500 for materials and labor. This will come from the current operating budget. The estimated increase in utility costs will be paid for out of the revenues generated from the rental of the shelter. As part of the deliberations between FWP and the community of Bigfork during the original Harry Horn Park capital project, it was agreed that shelter rental revenues would be used to help pay for maintenance of Harry Horn Park. Currently, revenue from shelter rental is approximate $150/yr.

10f. Maintenance cost will be low and will be reflected in the additional cost for power and water as noted in 10d.

11a. During construction some ground disturbance will occur due to trenching and use of equipment. This will be visible until the plant community has reestablished itself through reseeding efforts.

11c. The extension of the power and water lines to the picnic shelter will have a positive effect on the quality of the recreational experience. It will provide convenience and safety for the users of this area. It will help in maintenance of the ice rink and allow for after-dark use both for skating in the winter and for shelter use in the summer.

PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? YES / NO If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action:

Significant impacts from the construction of the utility line extensions are not anticipated. Cumulative impacts are judged to be minor and can be mitigated by management controls; therefore, an EIS is not required.

2. Describe the level of public involvement for this project, if any; and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Public involvement is limited to oral and written comments. Due to lack of any significant environmental issues or other controversy, this level of involvement is considered appropriate.

3. Duration of comment period, if any:

Public comment period was thirty days, from October 22 through November 21, 2003.

4. Name, title, address, and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

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